

UNCLAS ZAGREB 01053

SIPDIS
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8390
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNEXC/EXRBS COLLECTIVE

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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE HOH AND BALIAN
DEPT FOR ISN/ECC PVANSON, ACHURCH, JMCLELLAN, NJOHANSEN
VIENNA FOR DEA ISRAEL AND BYERLY
SARAJEVO FOR CARLIN AND TILLMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: Police Make Major Seizures of Heroin, Cocaine

1. Last week Croatian Police announced the seizure of seven kilograms of heroin in two border searches into Croatia. In one action on 22 November, border police apprehended two Macedonians who were crossing the Serbian-Croatian border at Bajakovo with 2 kilograms of heroin, Heptanon and other narcotic tablets. In the second action one day later border police at the same border crossing uncovered more than five kilograms of heroin hidden in a vehicle driven by a Kosovar man. The seizures have a street value of between \$800,000 - \$1 million and follow the well-known "Balkan Route" of narcotics transiting from Afghanistan to Western Europe. Along this route, police have seized about 72 kilograms of illegal narcotics this year. These recent captures represent significant quantities of heroin transiting through Croatia.

2. This week, police successfully completed a joint Croatian-Greek-Bosnian operation, with cooperation from the DEA, in which they stopped a total of 160 kilograms of cocaine transiting through the Croatian port of Rijeka. The operation consisted of controlled deliveries in the various countries. The first seizure took place in the Croatian port of Rijeka in September with the discovery of 81 kilograms of cocaine valued at about \$8.2 million. In October, Greek police made a second large seizure, and this week police in Republika Srpska apprehended six suspects associated with the operation. Also this week, Croatian police apprehended two Croats in connection with the smuggling ring and for illegal arms possession. The Croatian investigation is ongoing.

3. Police have received training and ongoing operational support from the DEA, training from ICITAP, and both border police and customs officers have received EXBS-sponsored detection equipment (endoscope) and training. In a recent meeting, Director of Police Marijan Benko alluded to the operation and told us that cooperation with regional colleagues, particularly the RS, has been excellent. Despite such successes on regional cooperation, the EU and others still see the need to improve interagency coordination in Croatia and make progress on integrated border management. Police have requested additional training from ICITAP on narcotics-related issues in the coming months.

BRADTKE